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Armenian, Coptic, and Abyssinian—and with those oriental churches which have from time to time been brought under the sway of Rome.

The second part of this valuable work deals with the religious life of the oriental churches, describing first the inter-confessional relations of the various branches of oriental Christendom, and of these churches with Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The cultus of the Greek Orthodox churches is treated under four heads: "Church Buildings," "Church Year," "Liturgy," and "Sacraments." Although the sketch is brief, it reveals the fact that Dr. Beth is thoroughly familiar with the details of the cultus of the Greek church, and knows how to portray them in a fresh and interesting way. The chapter on "Dogma and Piety" gives proof of patient investigation and a thorough mastery of the theme. Taken altogether, the work of Dr. Beth calls for the highest commendation and will prove of great service to students of oriental Christendom.

An excellent German translation, by Konrad Grass, of the introductory portions of the two standard Russian works on dogmatics,⁴ has recently appeared from the press. The first part consists of Makari's *Geschichte der rechtgläubig-dogmatischen Gottesgelehrtheit*, the second of Silwestr's *Geschichte der dogmatischen Wissenschaft*. The little volume will prove of great interest and value to western students of Russian systematic theology. The two works chosen by Grass for translation divide the Russian theological student world into two camps. While they differ somewhat in point of view and method of treatment, the historical portions in the main follow similar lines and reach similar results. A valuable part of this small volume consists of the alphabetical register of works on Russian systematic theology. The catalogue is large, and the reader will no doubt be surprised at the scope and thoroughness with which many questions of theology have been treated by Russian writers. There is also added to the volume before us an alphabetical register of the present Russian theological reviews and current periodicals.

EDWIN KNOX MITCHELL.

HARTFORD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

THE RELIGION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

HISTORIANS tell us that great movements in the field of thought develop in silence for years, and then come to the surface at about the same time here and there. In like manner it has often proved that

⁴ *Geschichte der Dogmatik in russischer Darstellung*. Von KONRAD GRASS. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1902. xiv + 179 pages.

inventions or discoveries in technical lines or in natural science have, it may be in slightly different forms, been proclaimed at the same time by various persons. Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums* was the first book in a new movement in the effort to clear up doubts and difficulties in reference to the foundations of Christianity. A large part of the books that followed Harnack's in time were directly drawn forth by his book, and sold well because they caught his wave of popularity. Now a book has appeared that touches the foundations, it is true, but in a different way from that of Harnack and as a result of long researches. Bernhard Weiss, the professor at Berlin, who has done fifty years of theological work in the universities, and who has published during that period many a book about the New Testament, held his introductory lecture in the University of Königsberg, on July 27, 1852. In that lecture he discussed the relations of exegesis to biblical theology. It was his opinion that the detailed work upon the single writings of the New Testament should finally be concentrated, boiled down, and digested, so that the manifold colors should unite in one ray of truth and light.

During the long years of lecturing and of teaching Weiss has repeatedly done a certain work of this kind for students and theologians. Now, however, he has taken it up again in a form which addresses itself, not merely to the circles of theology, but as well to every educated man.¹ This book is dedicated to his old friend Dr. Dryander, the upper court preacher at Berlin. It contains, after the introduction, three parts. The introduction itself begins with defining the essence of Christianity and passes then to treat of the nature or essence of revelation, of holy Scripture, and of religion and theology. The first of the three main divisions places before us the presuppositions of the salvation offered to us; namely, the essence of God, the essence of the world and of humanity, sin and its consequences, the divine government, and the preparation for salvation. The second division turns to the salvation offered in Christ, dealing with the Son of God and Son of man, the life-work of Jesus, the saving importance of the death of Jesus, the ascended Christ and the Spirit, and the word and sacraments. The third division presents the realization of salvation, discussing election and calling, saving faith and the position of the saved (their rank and degree), new birth and sanctification, preservation and perfection, the church and the kingdom of God, and finally the end of the world.

¹ *Die Religion des Neuen Testaments*. Von BERNHARD WEISS. Stuttgart und Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1903. xii + 321 pages. M. 6; bound, M. 7.50.

The author is determined to let the Scriptures speak for themselves, and he therefore gives everywhere what almost might be called a cento of Scripture paraphrase. Happily the passages referred to are named in the text in a parenthesis; thus everyone can refer and read for himself, like the Bereans. As we take the book in hand, the question presents itself whether biblical theology advances or not, whether in the fifty years that Bernhard Weiss has been pondering over the New Testament there has really been no new thing learned, whether this is precisely the book he would have written at that first moment. The answer is decidedly that there has been an advance, and that this book is on many points different from what it would have been a half a century ago. The misfortune is that many of the readers of the book will only look for a confirmation of what they once learned. If they find a sentence in Weiss that does not agree with their own old views, that sentence will be at once rejected by them or explained away. On that plan it would not be strange if biblical theology should not advance.

In one respect such readers will find a comfort in one observation. It is the custom of late years to say that the Revelation cannot be the work of the apostle John, or that if it be, then the gospel cannot be, and that one epistle or another must be attributed to a different writer from the one named. Here Weiss is conservative. He quotes the Apocalypse as well as the gospel and the epistles as from John. He refers to 2 Peter as readily as to 1 Peter or as to Romans. And, as far as single passages are concerned, he uses the end of the last chapter of Matthew like the rest of that gospel. The end of Mark and the story of the adulterous woman are of course passed over. The moment for the completion of the canon is (p. 37) the last quarter of the second century. It is interesting in this connection to see how Paul's treatment of the Old Testament, his use of the original or of the Greek translation, and his free handling of it are applied by Weiss (pp. 34-36) to the whole question of the canon, or of inspiration, as showing that the precise wording of Scripture is not to be regarded as of divine origin. In reference to Old Testament prophecy we are told (p. 21) that the office of the prophets was the interpretation of God's revelation for the people, and not a supernatural communication of new truths. On p. 29 Weiss agrees with Lessing, that the most striking miracle could not confirm the truth of a doctrine, and concludes that a revelation shows itself to be divine in meeting our deepest religious needs and in making us ready and fit to do God's will. In leaving this part of the discussion it is only necessary to point to pp. 54, 55, with their

presentation of the exegesis of dogmaticians, of rationalists, and of philological historians. Much as the author commends the philological and historical treatment of the New Testament, he insists upon it that no one can duly understand it who does not accept it as testimony to the revelation of salvation in Christ.

If the New Testament is the message about Jesus, then the view taken of his person and work must be the heart of it all. The excitement of late years in reference to the question of the supernatural conception and birth does not affect the author. He says (p. 143) that the miracle of the incarnation is as little to be understood when we assume that the flesh and blood in which the Son of God appeared was supernaturally begotten, as if we assume that it was begotten according to the course of nature. As to the life of Jesus we learn (p. 145): "Nowhere do the gospels show in him a higher knowledge, surpassing the bounds of his time and of his nation;" Jesus regards Psalm 110, a late one, as written by David, and Deuteronomy as written by Moses, and the book of Jonah as real history. And further, Weiss holds that the miracles done by him are not signs of divine might, but are common as well to the prophets and apostles (p. 146), and even in John are described as the work of the Father, thus thoroughly putting aside the dogmatical efforts (p. 147) to make comprehensible the union of two natures in the man Jesus. The peculiarity of his life on earth lies (p. 148) in his complete knowledge of God and his full union with God, so that he is the most perfect revelation of the Father and knows exactly what God's will is, and (p. 150) in his freedom from sin.

Jesus, who had no divine omniscience (p. 160), did not at the opening of his work on earth anticipate a violent death, but reached a knowledge of it as the opposition to him increased. His death was, however, not the punishment of the innocent for the guilty (p. 166), even though he calls it a redemption, and as little is it the condition (p. 175) upon which God forgives sin and foregoes punishing. His death, viewed by believers as the means of reconciliation and as the price of redemption, makes it possible for God (pp. 176, 177) to let the punishment fall away and to exercise his gracious forgiveness.

If the discussions of late have turned largely upon the above-mentioned question of the miraculous birth, they have as well directed themselves to the question of the resurrection. It will here be enough to press the one point (pp. 184, 185) that, according to Weiss, Jesus and the whole New Testament understand by resurrection not a return to earthly life, according to the pharisaic hope, but an awakening to

heavenly life. Weiss says: "It is accordingly incontestable, that the still ruling view, according to which the resurrection of Jesus was only a resurrection to earthly life, such as even in the Old Testament tradition had taken place in the case of various dead persons, and in the New Testament had been effected by Jesus himself several times—that this view irrecoverably does away with the totally unique signification which the whole New Testament attributes to the resurrection of Christ." Weiss insists upon it, accordingly, that the appearances of Jesus to the disciples must be placed upon a level with the appearance to Paul, just as Paul himself places them.

It is then a necessary consequence of this, when we read (p. 186) that "the conception of a special miracle in which Jesus in his earthly body ascended into heaven is contrary to Scripture." From the moment of the resurrection on, Jesus was in his heavenly body (p. 187): "His resurrection is his ascension in Jesus' words as well as in the whole apostolic preaching." Even if the expression "God-Man" does not occur in the New Testament, Weiss thinks that it fits the ascended Jesus, but he deprecates the carrying back of this term into the earthly life of the Son of man.

In the presentation of the view of the New Testament touching the Spirit, Weiss finds it hard to understand how people continue to refer to the Spirit in the New Testament as a person, and shows (pp. 197, 198) how in even the most frequently quoted passages there is no possibility of the personal conception.

Baptism is taken by Weiss, as by others, to have originally been immersion. He begins his discussion of it with the words: "The rite of immersion" (p. 204). He further (p. 211) considers it beyond doubt that in the New Testament period only adults were baptized. Proceeding from these two points, he then explains the passage to sprinkling and to infant baptism.

When the Lord's Supper comes to be spoken of, Weiss insists upon it (pp. 208, 209) that Jesus does not compare his body with the bread or his blood with the wine. Jesus intends to show the disciples that his death, which he then saw to be approaching, was not to be viewed by them as a gloomy fate, but as a means for the divine gift of salvation. Bread is broken to be distributed to the participants in the feast; his body is to be broken in death that they may personally partake of his salvation.

That is enough to show the mass of interesting material contained in this volume. The reader will think of many another point: elec-

tion, reward, second coming. One of the great virtues of this book is its concentration of New Testament theology into one short view. Christianity passes rapidly before the reader's eyes in one clear picture. It is, of course, necessary that the proof-texts should be named, yet it would be a good thing, if it were only possible in a business way, if the text could be given as one clear essay in another edition, an edition for cursory reading. This book should be translated into English, but by a good translator, not by a beginner. Perhaps in the translation the proof-texts could be given in an appendix, page for page, but the essay itself should then contain no numbers or signs. The texts for the page in order would be clear enough.

Schleiermacher said that practical theology was the crown of theology. He was right. Bernhard Weiss has written for years theological books of all kinds, and especially commentaries, and in his short commentary to the whole New Testament with his own Greek text he has given a handbook for theological students. But now he should crown it all with a popular commentary, accompanying the German text, and that not too short a commentary. The church itself should have a share in his ripe work.

CASPAR RENÉ GREGORY.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEIPZIG.

THE BOOKS OF KINGS.

It was a complaint of the elder Delitzsch, twenty-five years ago, that modern Old Testament criticism criticised too much, and constructed too little. This has often been re-echoed since. But, of course, construction has from the first been its logical aim. Whether this work was delayed too long can be fairly determined only in view of the obstacles to be cleared away, and with some appreciation of the difficulties which the fresh constructions involve. Now, at all events, the work is going on quickly. The literature of Old Testament study, particularly in English, has been transformed within twenty years—almost within ten.

The books of Kings were not among the first to receive systematic attention, although the surprising light from the monuments led to many discussions of certain parts. Old Testament history was rewritten, and Old Testament histories published, from the modern point of view, before a complete treatment of the historical documents of the royal period was in the hands of students. Until the appearance of Ben-